

THE OLDTIMER

Volume 34, Number 4

Newsletter of the Josephine County Historical Society

December, 1999

We have a date

DECEMBER

■ **All month.** The Book Shop is a great place to get your holiday stocking stuff! This year, we have hand-crocheted, beaded stockings for girls courtesy of Lucile Fisher and aromatic lavender wands made from our lavender plants, courtesy of Phyllis Russell. See the bookshop, page 3, for gift book selections.

■ **All month.** Enjoy the Gilmore Family History exhibit at Evergreen Federal on Sixth Street.

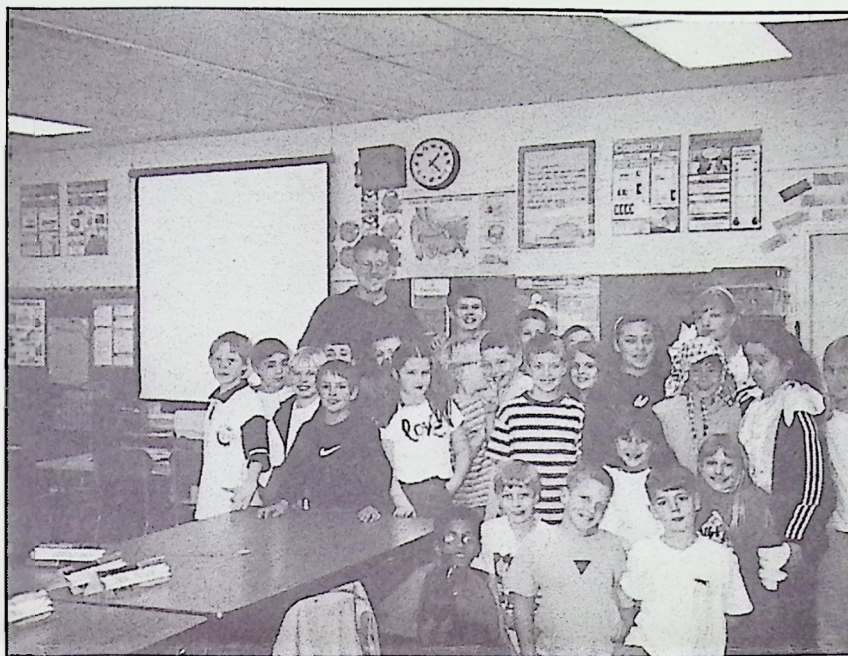
■ **Saturday, December 11.** Stop by South Middle School, where Mel Shaw and John Cova will be selling our holiday items at the bazaar.

■ **Saturday, December 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** At the Research Library, our fourth annual bake sale will offer delicious temptations. From 1 to 3 p.m., book signing by Jean Boling (see page 3).

■ **Saturday, December 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** Elves Workshop in the Barn behind the Schmidt House. Living nativity scene every half hour between 1 and 3 p.m., a gift from the History Players!

☛ *Remember to read the Mondays Make History box in the Daily Courier for events not listed here.*

For information on any of these events call 479-7827.



Mike Oaks joins students at Highland Elementary School for an Applegate Trail exhibit and talk.

“My pledge to the society is to keep myself visible”

New Historical Society president blends lifestyle with local history

By Darlene Leach

Mike Oaks, upcoming president of the Josephine County Historical Society, is a man who lives and breathes the history of Josephine County.

Ever since his arrival as a teenager in 1946, he and his brother Leo hiked the trails of Mount Sexton and the surrounding mountains. They explored the mines and old homesteads of the area in order to absorb the local history and be able to identify these places more thoroughly.

Mike and Leo interviewed pioneers who were still alive at the time and devoured their stories. Mike captures the essence of many oldtimers, such as C.J. Howard and other characters he portrays as a member of the

Living History Players in presentations at local service clubs and schools.

In his four years as a member, Mike has been involved in all phases of the society's operations, including updating library files, writing weekly Mondays Make History columns, helping those who seek information about relatives from long ago Grants Pass and helping at Sourdough Gulch gold mining exhibits. In addition, he leads bus tours and speaks to schoolchildren about the Applegate Trail and the rich history of Josephine County.

Mike also serves on the Grants Pass Historic Sites Commission.

Even with all of these activities, Mike still has time to work on his book about brick business buildings

See MIKE, page 2

Letters to the editor

Dear Mollie Means:

The Josephine County Board of Commissioners would like to extend a personal thank you for the participation of the Historical Society in the Josephine County Family Fest '99.

It was a wonderful opportunity to educate our children and families. It's great to see families spend time together and to have organizations in our community work so well together.

It is our hope that the Josephine County Historical Society will participate in Children's Week again next year.

Cordially,
Sara McDonald
Director

Commission for Children & Families

Rose Scott:

Thanks to you and the Historical Society for lending the art and providing the historic players at the downtown Sixth and G Welcome Center Dedication. It made the evening so much more enjoyable!

Thanks,
The Dedication Committee
Towne Center Association

Dear JCHS:

Thank you for your contribution to the convention basket.

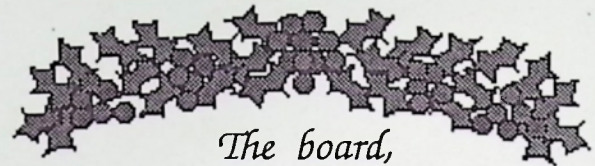
Sincerely,
Mollie Means,
Ambassador President
Chamber of Commerce

Dear History Players:

Thank you for a job well done.

It was very effective having people from the past talk from their graves. It was an afternoon well spent.

Don Ness



*The board,
staff and volunteers at the
Josephine County Historical
Society wish you a happy
holiday season!*



MIKE continued from page 1

in Grants Pass and to have a life and to travel with his wife, the former Jean Bosse.

Mike expresses his dedication with the following:

"My pledge to the society is to keep myself visible in much the same way that I have in the past. I believe that history is a valuable tool in the community. A clearly defined past honors the present, which, in turn, will determine our course for the future."

THE OLDTIMER

is the newsletter of the
Josephine County Historical Society
512 S.W. Fifth St.
Grants Pass, OR 97526.
(541) 479-7827

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Annual dues are \$15 and include a subscription.

Patricia Snyder, editor

The quarterly circulation is 650.

The publishing committee also produces an annual historical publication, mailed free to all members of the society.

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From the Book Shop

The society's bookstore, located at Fifth and K streets, offers a selection that make great gifts.

"CROXTON MEMORIAL CEMETERY CALENDAR 2000," by Jean Boling, is a spiral bound calendar that features photos of the historic gravestones from the Grants Pass pioneer cemetery. Find the secret in the stones! \$5.

"100 GREAT ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILES" in full-color prints, by Clarence P. Hornung. From the primitive steam-powered vehicles of the mid-19th century to the swift and opulent conveyances of this century's second decade. \$19.95.

"CARRIAGES AND SLEIGHS." 228 illustrations from the 1862 Lawrence, Bradley & Pardee catalog. \$11.95.

"OREGON COVERED BRIDGES," by Bert Webber. The expanded edition includes 65 covered bridges. This book is the who, what, why, when, where to go and how to get there to see Oregon covered bridges. \$12.95.

"THE ART OF COOKING IN GRANTS PASS" is the silver anniversary reprint of a popular local cookbook by the American Association of University Women. The printing is being done in conjunction with the AAUW. Recipes are copied as they were originally. It's spiral bound and about 50 pages. \$5.95.

"SINKING OF THE TITANIC EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS," by Henry Mowbray. These first-hand accounts by survivors offer heart-wrenching testimony about the great disaster, steeped in the sentiments of the day. \$6.95.

"THE STORY OF THE TITANIC AS TOLD BY THE SURVIVORS," edited by Jack Wincour. The authors of the four accounts collected in this volume each present the catastrophe from their own viewpoint. \$8.95.

"OREGON'S GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY," by Bert and Margie Webber. Here is the complete story with dozens of photographs, many made within hours of the explosions, and pictures of the scene today. All were caught after the most costly, worldwide search in train holdup history. \$8.95.

NEW BOOK SIGNING

"CEMETERY CHRONICLES: A Guide to the Cemeteries of Josephine County," by Jean Boling. Hot off the press, the stories of the gravestones and main families in the local cemeteries, directions to reach pioneer cemeteries, many photos and trivia. An excellent reference. \$15.95 until Dec. 25, \$22.95 after. Grab an autograph on Dec. 18 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Research Library.

When you've read it, give The Oldtimer to a friend

Please enroll the following as a member in the Josephine County Historical Society. Enclosed are the annual dues of:

- ☐ \$15 (individual)
- ☐ \$25 (family)
- ☐ \$55 (corporate)
- ☐ \$100 (sustaining member)

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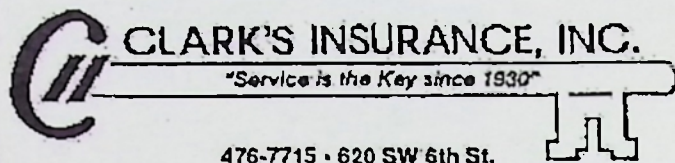
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History at the center

Area history blooms over past 100 years

One hundred years of Grants Pass history from the center's clipping file reveals a rich picture of life here. The following are a few highlights.

In 1899, 100 years ago

A large crowd assembled in the opera house on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Oregon's statehood and celebrated in song and speechmaking from 2 to 4:30 in the afternoon.

Grants Pass has a population of about 2,800 and is growing steadily but not booming.

The post office opens at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 7:30 p.m., except Sunday.

Both Houses of the State Legislature passed a bill amending the Grants Pass City Charter, which would grant authorities larger powers. An Ashland newspaper commended the towns of Southern Oregon for pushing forward toward public improvements.

In 1925, 75 years ago

A patrol was established on Redwood Highway to disinfect all cars coming from California in order to prevent

the bringing of foot and mouth disease into Oregon.

Tourist season is booming with an average of 25 cars signing up nightly at Grants Pass Auto Camp.

Another tourist, Zane Gray, vacationed for two weeks on the Rogue River at Galice and enjoyed catching 24 steelhead.

On April 11, the north pump of the Grants Pass Irrigation District started water in the ditches to meet an increased demand for water due to a very dry March.

On May 23, 66 seniors of Grants Pass High School received diplomas at graduation exercises at the Rivoli Theatre.

In 1949, 50 years ago

The Chamber of Commerce estimated the population of Grants Pass at 10,500.

There was hope the serious unemployment problem in Josephine County might be solved, in part, with the reopening of several large sawmills and the lifting of truck load limits.

Good news for fishermen came when the water level at Savage Rapids Dam was raised 10 feet with no loss of fish.

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History at the center

Good news for Grants Pass that no accidents involving drunk driving over the New Year's weekend were reported while, nationwide, there were more than 300 persons killed.

In 1974, 25 years ago

Voters passed a \$580,000 tax base for Rogue Community College after turning down a request for a \$740,000 base. Fall enrollment rose 22 percent over the previous year, to 1,329 students.

Planned development of Portola Park sparked months of controversy over whether a lighted softball field should be included.

Josephine County commissioners adopted a \$3.58 million bid to build a new three-story law enforcement and courts building after haggling with the low bidder, whose proposal was beyond the \$2.9 million originally budgeted.

Even as the county pushed for development, Grants Pass got in on the action as a land swap resulted in ownership of property on A Street between Fifth and Sixth for a new city hall, and voters approved an \$850,000 bond for the \$1.3 million project.



FROM THE COLLECTION: This cabinet of antique toys is in the children's room in the Schmidt House. Visit during December when the house will be decorated for the holidays.

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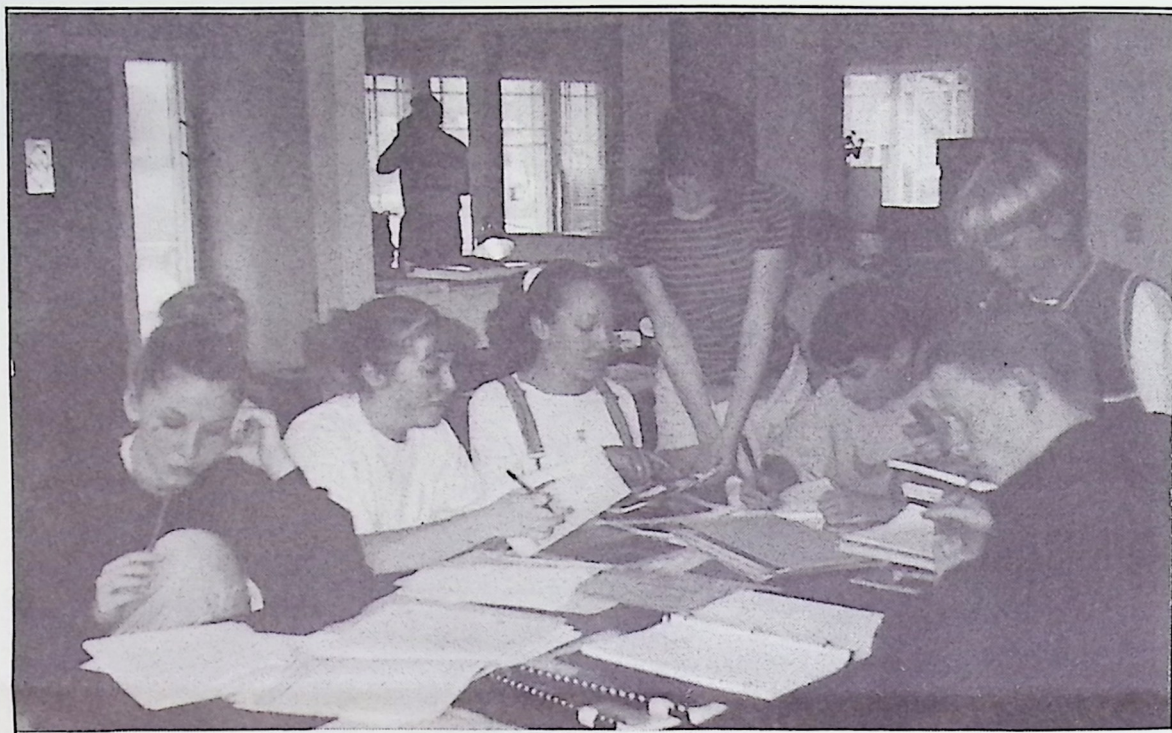
Wm. Townsend
Grants Pass, OR

From the Research Library

Library readies to aid student writers

The library staff is gearing up for the new year's group of North Middle School students who research a Josephine County history topic for their school term project.

If you read the Mondays Make History series in the Daily Courier, you have probably enjoyed many of their finished papers. Marcus Zottola, the student in the right-hand corner, won the student 1999 Pauline Meade Shier Achievement Award for his outstanding work titled, "History of the Jewett Mine," published in August.



Grant allows historians to again peek into past

In October, the Research Library heard from Trust Management Services, LLC, of Waldport, Ore., that they had approved our grant request for \$6,500 to purchase a refurbished microfilm reader and printer.

Since we have been without one for more than three years, this is great news to all those researchers who could not access our extensive microfilm collection.

The unit is a Canon PC Printer 80, a basic, no-frills

model which serves our needs just fine. It is not one of the newer, very expensive models that have many functions, so don't expect to enlarge sections or see both sides of the newspaper at once.

Do expect an easy-to-manage unit that provides a high-quality print on plain paper.

Our thanks to Trust Management Services for helping us preserve history!

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From the Board

Annual meeting results

In November, the annual meeting was held in the Schmidt House Barn. About 35 members and friends enjoyed the potluck meeting.

Pauline Meade Shier Achievement Award

In tribute to Pauline's 30-year service to the society, a beautiful plaque in the library displays inscribed names of an outstanding student and an exceptional adult or business for each year since 1992. This year we honor:

Student: Marcus Zottola for his research paper on the Jewett Mine. Marcus was present, along with his mother and brother, to accept the award, which included a \$100 savings bond donated by Bank of America Manager Peggy Campbell.

Adult: Amy L. Hendrickson for her sustained interest in Josephine County history, for her support of the society's programs and for her generous contributions over the years, which have allowed us to make significant advances in furthering the society's mission. Amy, who lives in Seattle, accepted the award by letter. "... My roots are deep in the county, for not only did my parents love the area, but my grandfather, and even my great grandfather was attracted to Oregon ... I would like to think that my family would approve of my helping the society, even if only in a 'long distance' style."

Outstanding Volunteer Service Award

Started in 1992, a plaque hangs in the library which bears the names of outstanding volunteers. For their many hours of donated time, for generously contributing their talents and skills, and for their dependability and positive attitude, these names were inscribed on the plaque this year:

Jean Boling, Jan Collins, Mollie Means, Kerry Mitchell

All volunteers and board members were recognized by Mel Shaw, outgoing president, with certificates of appreciation for their work and for their support during his term.

Mollie Means recognized the Living History players with handmade angels for their outstanding performances during the year.

The results of the ballot for the new board were announced and the new officers were sworn in.

Mel Shaw reviewed the accomplishments of this year before turning the meeting over to new President Mike Oaks, who talked about his goals for the coming year. Mike is featured on the front page of this newsletter.

Your 2000 Board of Directors

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Special thanks to the following members for helping pay off the property debt:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Dorothy Bobinski | James & Sara Rowen |
| Judy Boling | Mel & Margie Shaw |
| Dawne E. Fox | Frank A. Sprinkle |
| Amy L. Hendrickson | Tommy Thompson |
| Bob & Jan Lane | Opal Tice |
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• • • • •

A generous gift enables the Historical Society to continue its heritage of providing outstanding services for generations to come. Please consider a bequest to the Society in your will create a legacy allowing future generations the opportunity to learn about and value their past. Your gift is an investment in the future of our community.

THE OLDTIMER

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